

How to Clean Your Couch

Fabric • Microfiber • Leather


A Step-by-Step [Couch Cleaning Guide for Canadian](#) By SKYREX Property Services

Before You Start: Check Your Cleaning Code

Find the label under your cushions or on the sofa base

Every couch has a care label with a cleaning code. Using the wrong cleaner can cause permanent damage. Always check this first.

Code	What It Means — Safe Cleaners
W	Water-based cleaning only — mild soap + water, upholstery shampoo
S	Solvent only — rubbing alcohol, dry-cleaning solvent. No water.
WS / SW	Water or solvent — either method is safe
X	Vacuum only — no liquids of any kind

 **Tip:** Cannot find the label? Test any cleaner on a small hidden area and wait 10 minutes before full use.



Section 1: How to Clean a Fabric Couch

Best for: cotton, polyester, linen, blended textiles — usually W or WS coded

Fabric sofas are the most common type in Canadian homes. Most are safe for water-based cleaning. Follow the steps below for a thorough, damage-free clean.

HOW TO CLEAN A FABRIC COUCH (STEP-BY-STEP)

FABRIC SOFAS (Cotton, Polyester, Linen blends) | **SAFE CLEANING:** Check for W or WS code

- VACUUM THOROUGHLY**
Remove cushions; vacuum all surfaces and seams with soft brush.
- PRE-TREAT STAINS**
Apply cleaner, wait 5-10 mins, blot gently; use **ENZYME CLEANER** for tough stains.
- DEEP CLEAN THE FABRIC**
W-CODED: Mix dish soap & warm water. Use foam only. Clean sections; blot to rinse.
S-CODED: Use **ISOPROPYL ALCOHOL**. Lightly spray & blot; Avoid water.
- RINSE AND DRY**
Blot moisture; open windows or use fan. Dry for 2-6 hours before sitting.
- APPLY FABRIC PROTECTOR**
Use **SCOTCHGARD** or **303 FABRIC GUARD**. Brush fabric to refresh.

BEST FABRIC CLEANERS FOR COUCHES

Portable Machines	Spray-on Spot	Enzyme Cleaners	DIY Solutions
BISSELL LITTLE GREEN Deep cleaning	FOLEX Instant Spot Remover	NATURE'S MIRACLE Tough Stains	DIY RECIPE Baking soda, white vinegar, dish soap

1

Vacuum Thoroughly

Remove all cushions. Vacuum every surface, seat base, armrests, back panel, and all crevices. Use a soft-brush attachment to protect the fibers. Focus on seams and gaps where pet hair and dust build up most.

2

Pre-Treat Stains

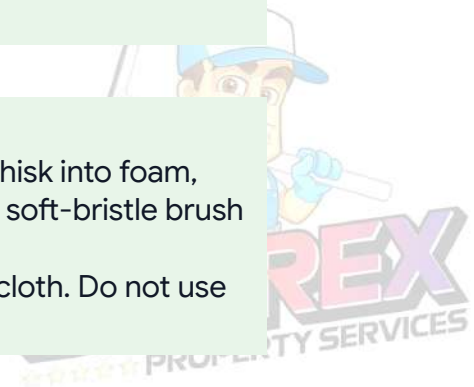
Apply cleaner directly to any visible stains. Wait 5-10 minutes. Blot gently, never rub. Always work from the outer edge of the stain inward. For pet urine, food, or blood, use a bio-enzymatic (enzyme) cleaner.

3

Deep Clean the Fabric

W-code: Mix a few drops of mild dish soap with warm water. Whisk into foam, apply only the suds, not the liquid. Work in small sections with a soft-bristle brush in circular motions, then blot with a clean damp cloth.

S-code: Lightly spray isopropyl alcohol. Blot with a clean white cloth. Do not use water on S-coded fabric.



4

Rinse and Dry

Blot the sofa with a dry microfiber towel to remove moisture. Open windows or run a fan. Most fabric sofas dry in 2-6 hours with good airflow. Do not sit on the couch until fully dry, moisture trapped in the cushion foam causes mold.

5

Apply Fabric Protector

Once fully dry, apply a fabric protector spray (e.g., Scotchgard or 303 Fabric Guard). Use a soft brush to lift the fabric fibers back into place. This step helps block future spills and makes maintenance cleaning faster.

⚠️ Avoid: Over-wetting fabric is the most common DIY mistake. Excess water soaks into cushion foam and causes mold especially in humid basements or during winter months.

Fabric Stain Quick Reference

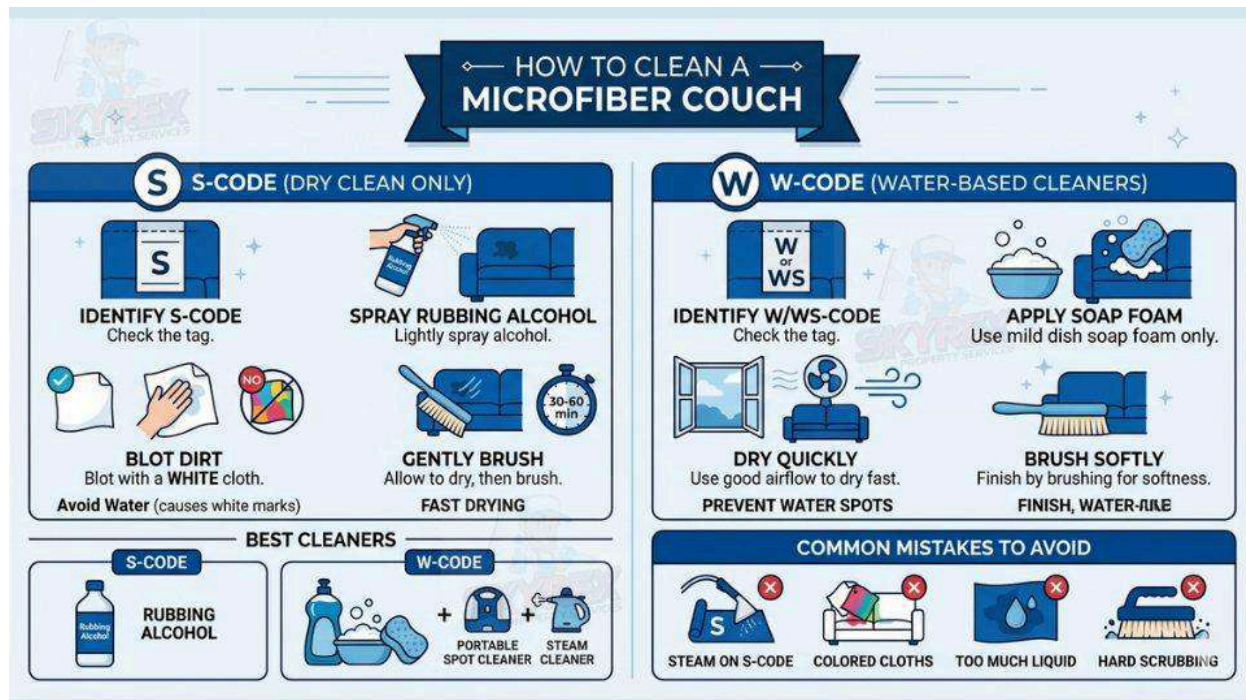
Stain Type	Method
Coffee / Tea	Blot immediately — dish soap + cold water solution
Red Wine	Blot with club soda — follow with baking soda paste
Pet Urine	Blot dry — apply bio-enzymatic cleaner — let dwell 10-15 min — blot clean
Grease / Oil	Sprinkle baking soda to absorb — remove with solvent (S-code)
Ink	Dab isopropyl alcohol — blot gently — repeat
Mud	Let dry fully — vacuum — then clean with appropriate method



Section 2: How to Clean a Microfiber Couch

Best for: synthetic polyester/nylon microfiber, usually S coded

Microfiber looks like fabric but behaves differently. Its ultra-fine fibers are packed tightly, creating a soft suede-like surface. Most microfiber sofas carry an S code — water can cause permanent white water marks.



Method A: Rubbing Alcohol (S-Code — Most Common)

- 1 Lightly Mist with Isopropyl Alcohol**
Pour rubbing alcohol (isopropyl alcohol) into a spray bottle. Mist the surface lightly, do not soak. Work in small sections.

- 2 Blot with a White Microfiber Cloth**
Use white or light-colored cloths, only colored cloths can transfer dye onto the fabric. Blot gently; do not scrub. The alcohol evaporates quickly and lifts dirt without leaving marks.

- 3 Brush to Restore Texture**
Once dry (30-60 minutes), use a soft-bristle brush to brush the fibers back into their natural direction. This brings back the suede-like texture.



Method B: Soap and Water (W or WS Code)

Some newer microfiber blends carry a W or WS code. If so, use the foam method:

- Mix a small amount of dish soap with warm water. Whisk into foam.
- Apply only the foam, not the liquid, to avoid over-saturating the fabric.
- Clean in small sections and dry quickly with good airflow.

Common Microfiber Cleaning Mistakes

Mistake	Why It's a Problem
Using a steam cleaner	Heat strips the protective coating on microfiber fibers
Using colored cloths	Dye can transfer permanently onto the upholstery
Too much liquid	Over-wetting causes mold risk and permanent water marks
Hard scrubbing	Breaks delicate synthetic fibers — damages the texture



Pro Tip: Always test the alcohol method on a hidden area first. Most microfibers respond well, but always confirm before cleaning the full sofa.



Section 3: How to Clean a Leather Couch

Best for: pigmented leather, aniline leather, faux / PU leather

Leather sofas are durable but need careful cleaning. The wrong product can dry out, crack, or permanently discolor the surface. Before cleaning, identify your leather type.

Leather Type	Description & Care Level
Pigmented (Protected)	Has a surface coating — most durable, easiest to clean
Full-Grain / Aniline	No protective coating — softer, natural look, most sensitive
Faux / PU Leather	Most forgiving — wipe down with a damp cloth safely

Quick Test: Rub a small drop of water on a hidden area. If it absorbs quickly = likely aniline. If it beads up = likely pigmented leather.

HOW TO CLEAN A LEATHER COUCH

UNDERSTAND YOUR LEATHER TYPE

PIGMENTED (PROTECTED) LEATHER EASY TO CLEAN	FULL-GRAIN / ANILINE LEATHER SOFT & NATURAL	FAUX LEATHER (BONDED / PU) WIPE DAMP
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QUICK WATER TEST

Protective Coating pigmented VS Absorbs Water Aniline

STAIN REMOVAL

STAIN TYPE	ACTION
INK	DAB ALCOHOL (Test Area)
GREASE	CORNSTARCH & WIPE
PET STAINS	ENZYME CLEANER (Blot Immediately)

STEP-BY-STEP CLEANING METHOD

- VACUUM**
Use Soft Brush
- DRY WIPE**
Remove Loose Dust
- DRIT WIPE**
Rrrre of Wiber Clear.
- GENTLE CLEAN**
Soap + Distill Water
- GENTLE CLEAN**
Soap + Distilled Water
- REMOVE RESIDUE**
Wipe with Pure Water
- DRY IMMEDIATELY**
Pat Dry Surface
- CONDITION LEATHER**
Restore Oils, Prevent Cracks (Every 3-6 Months)

THINGS TO AVOID

- BLEACH
- AMMONIA
- SILICONE SPRAYS
- BABY WIPES

TOP RATED LEATHER CLEANERS

- CHEMICAL GUYS
- LEATHER HONEY
- LEATHER CPR
- LEXOL

Step-by-Step Leather Cleaning



1 Vacuum First

Use a soft-brush vacuum attachment to remove crumbs and dust from all crevices and seams.

2 Dry Wipe the Surface

Use a dry microfiber cloth to remove surface dust before introducing any moisture.

3 Clean with a Mild Solution

Mix a few drops of Castile soap or saddle soap with distilled water. Dampen a cloth, not dripping wet and wipe the leather in sections.

4 Remove Soap Residue

Follow immediately with a second cloth dampened with plain distilled water. This lifts any remaining soap film.

5 Dry Immediately

Pat the surface dry with a clean microfiber cloth right away. Never let leather air-dry while still wet, it can warp or stiffen.

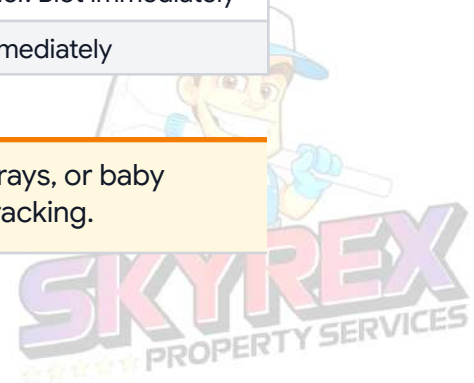
6 Apply Leather Conditioner

This is the most important step. Conditioning restores the natural oils leather loses over time. Apply a conditioner (e.g., Lexol or Leather Honey) every 3-6 months to prevent cracking. Buff gently with a clean cloth.

Leather Stain Removal

Stain Type	Recommended Method
Ink	Dab isopropyl alcohol on a cotton ball test hidden area
Grease / Oil	Sprinkle cornstarch, let sit 15 minutes, wipe clean
Pet Stains	Enzyme cleaner safe for pigmented leather. Blot immediately
General Marks	Mild soap solution + damp cloth + dry immediately


⚠ Never Use on Leather: Bleach, ammonia-based cleaners, silicone sprays, or baby wipes. These strip the leather's protective coating over time and cause cracking.



Couch Maintenance & Cleaning Frequency

Keep your sofa fresh year-round with this simple routine

How Often	What to Do
Weekly	Vacuum all surfaces and crevices with a soft upholstery attachment
Weekly	Fluff and rotate cushions to prevent uneven wear
Immediately	Spot clean any spills — the first 5 minutes are critical
Monthly	Sprinkle baking soda on fabric surfaces, leave 20–30 min, vacuum off
Seasonally	Full fabric clean using the appropriate method for your cleaning code
Every 12–18 months	Professional deep clean (general household)
Every 6–12 months	Professional deep clean (homes with pets or children)
Every 6 months	Professional deep clean (high-use sectionals)

 **Tip:** After winter, do a full seasonal clean. Closed windows, heavy indoor clothing, tracked-in salt, and pet dander build up significantly during the cold months.

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